

Mayor Dick Murphy

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MAYOR AND SDG&E ENCOURAGE ENERGY CONSERVATION AT START OF DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

San Diego – Mayor Dick Murphy and San Diego Gas & Electric officials today encouraged citizens to conserve electricity as part of an effort to avoid blackouts during the historically peak demand months of August and September.

“We are at the beginning of the warm months in San Diego,” said Mayor Murphy. “And recently energy conservation has waned. In order to avoid blackouts, I would encourage everyone, including businesses, to do their part to cut back on energy consumption.”

This year, weather forecasters expect a warmer than normal San Diego summer. This will likely contribute to increased electricity demand. That, combined with about 100,000 new SDG&E customers added to the system over the past five years, could tap out the power supply.

In addition, while the California Independent System Operator (ISO) has stated electricity supplies should be adequate this summer, the potential exists for transmission-related problems in Southern California. If statewide demand is high, it is possible there could be “power gridlock” in the system and the ISO would not be able to get electricity to where it is needed. The result for customers in Southern California, including San Diego, could be summer blackouts with very little warning.

The Mayor and SDG&E Chairman and CEO Edwin A. Guiles are asking everyone to conserve at the level achieved in the midst of the energy crisis of 2000 and 2001, when conservation resulted in a 15 percent reduction in energy demand.

The Mayor provided the following ways to implement energy conservation into your daily:

- Minimize energy use between the hours of noon and 6 p.m.
- Don’t use dishwashers or washing machines during peak hours of the afternoon
- Use fluorescent light bulbs and turn off lights when you leave a room
- Set your air conditioner at now lower than 75 degrees

At work:

- Set computer monitors to energy-saving settings
- Shut down computers (including monitors), printers and scanners before you leave your office
- Turn off coffee pots, copiers and any other equipment that’s not being used

“During the past 25 years, the demand for electricity has nearly doubled in our service territory,” said Guiles. “San Diegans have always responded whenever the call has gone out for conservation, and it remains key this summer. That’s why SDG&E offers a number of programs that provide incentives to businesses and residents for reducing electricity use.”

Guiles also commented on the importance of developing needed infrastructure in San Diego to ensure future energy reliability.

“I commend Mayor Murphy for making an investment in our region’s energy future and for partnering with SDG&E, not only on energy conservation and renewables, but also in supporting the need for vital infrastructure – including more transmission and local power plants – to keep up with the energy needs of our growing economy.”

The Mayor pointed out that the city of San Diego is doing its share to be part of the solution. In 1996 the city’s “Green” Building was retrofitted with energy-efficient technologies (using SDG&E’s Savings by Design Program) and is the first building in the nation to receive both the Environmental Protection Agency’s and the Department of Energy’s Energy Star designation. Last year the city activated a 54-kilowatt photovoltaic system that reduces the building’s energy use by an additional 25% during peak energy use hours.

In addition, photovoltaics on the “Green” Building and three other city of San Diego buildings generate 180 kilowatts of electricity, enough to power 90 homes.

The city also generates up to 17.5 megawatts of renewable energy annually. This “green power,” which comes from solar panels and methane gas, reduces greenhouse carbon dioxide emissions by 77,000 tons a year.

In addition, the city is developing energy efficiency and self-generation projects for 19 other city buildings. With a \$2.3 million California Energy Commission Loan, the city will begin installing these improvements this year.

“Conservation takes more than individuals to be effective,” added Mayor Murphy. “I would challenge businesses to follow the city’s lead and implement energy efficient technologies.”

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